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PORK PRODUCTION.

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California is producing only one hog for every three people in the State. She is consuming more than three times that many. Approximately forty earloads of pork products, chiefly hams, bacon and lard, and twenty-five cars of live hogs are shipped here from other states every week to supply the demand. Not only do we need more hogs to supply the market demand, but at the rate dairying is increasing more hogs are needed to consume the by-products from these dairies.

Ours is a meat consuming people and always will be. The hog is in a list all by himself as an economical producer of edible material. From one hundred pounds of dry matter a sheep will produce about 2.6 pounds of edible meat and a steer 2.8 pounds, while a hog from this same amount of feed will produce 15.6 pounds of meat suitable for human food.

The hog differs from other classes of stock in his physical make up and his ability to handle bulky food. The capacity of his stomach is only about 65 per cent of that of the sheep, or for one hundred pounds of live weight only about 33 per cent as much, while compared with a cow his stomach capacity is only 8 per cent. These figures readily indicate that the feed for the hog must necessarily be much more concentrated than that of the sheep and cow.

The markets here desire a hog of about two hundred and twenty-five pounds live weight and will pay a relatively higher price for hogs properly fed than for those improperly produced, provided they are of the type and finish that will dress out a large per cent of desirable cuts.

The younger the pig the more economical his gains, so it pays to get him up to market weight in the shortest possible time. The reports of various experiment stations show that pigs under fifty pounds gain weekly 16 per cent of their body weight, pigs under one hundred pounds 7.4 per cent, under two hundred pounds 5 per cent and under three hundred pounds only 3.8 per cent. Also that a fifty pound pig uses only 18 per cent of his feed for maintenance, leaving 82 per cent for gains. A one hundred pound pig has left for gains 75 per cent and a two hundred pound pig only 64 per cent of the feed that he consumes.

The smaller pig eats more for his size than the larger one and requires less for maintenance. Therefore, the only conclusion is that it pays to push them along rapidly.

If a pig were made to weigh two hundred and twenty-five pounds at eight months of age, he would have consumed for maintenance alone approximately two hundred seventy-five pounds of food of the equivalent of wheat middlings. If he did not reach the same weight until fourteen months of age, he would have consumed for maintenance alone approximately forty hundred and eighty pounds of food the equivalent of wheat middlings.

The amount digested over and above that used for maintenance represents the amount available for gains. Therefore, the pig that eats the most, provided he makes the proper use of it, is the most economical.

There are three breeds of lard hogs and two of bacon hogs generally distributed throughout this State and all of them seem to fit quite well into the environment. The lard breeds are Berkshire, Duroc-Jersey and Poland-China; the bacon breeds, Tamworths and Yorkshires. Breeders ordinarily succeed best with the breed they like best. Any breed will undoubtedly give more uniform results than a mixture of two or more breeds.

In the selection of sows for the breeding herd particular attention should be paid to confirmation, constitution and breediness or femininity. Choose those showing superior depth, width and uniformity, with length in proportion. Insist on a deep, broad chest with no perceptible drop back of the shoulders, with enough bone to carry the weight readily and sufficient quality to give an attractive appearance. Old sows produce larger, stronger pigs, and more of them than young sows, so they should not be sold so long as they breed regularly and are not too fat, heavy or deaf to make good mothers.

Six strong, vigorous pigs to the litter are more desirable than eight or nine inferior ones. Whether the number is large or small they should be kept growing rapidly until they are ready for market.

There is no more desirable feed for hogs of any age than alfalfa pasture, and the fact that it is available here for about nine months of the year is a most important item. As a single feed, it is not sufficient for growing or fattening hogs, but should be supplemented from a list of concentrates, among which are barley, corn, wheat, shorts, middlings, bran, oil meal, soy-bean meal, tankage, skim milk, beets, and pumpkins.